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Legislative Press Bureau at (401) 528-1743

THIS WEEK AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE HOUSE — Here are the highlights from news and events that took place in the General Assembly this week. For more information on any of these items visit <http://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease>



- **Speaker Shekarchi announces 14-bill package of housing legislation**
House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) announced a 14-bill package of legislation to address Rhode Island’s housing crisis. The bills, which focus mainly on increasing housing production, build upon housing packages that Speaker Shekarchi shepherded into law in each of the last two years’ sessions.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **House Judiciary Committee hears bills that seek to protect renters**
The House Judiciary Committee heard testimony on several pieces of legislation that would protect the state’s renters. The first ([2023-H 5691](#)), introduced by Rep. Jennifer Stewart (D-Dist. 59, Pawtucket), would prohibit a landlord from increasing the rent for a residential property more than once annually. The second ([2023-H 5362](#)), also sponsored by Representative Stewart, would require that landlords of residential properties must give tenants notice of a rent increase at least 120 days prior to the effective date of the increase. Similar legislation ([2023-S 0365](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Tiara Mack (D-Dist. 6, Providence). The third ([2023-H 5580](#)), introduced by Rep. David Morales (D-Dist. 7, Providence), would prohibit rental application fees. Similar legislation ([2023-S 0311](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Melissa A. Murray (D-Dist. 24, Woonsocket, North Smithfield).
[Click here to see rent increase release.](#)
[Click here to see application fees release.](#)
- **Sen. Euer, Rep. Felix introduce bill to extend foreclosure protection**
Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Dist. 13, Newport, Jamestown) and Rep. Leonela Felix (D-Dist. 61, Pawtucket) have introduced legislation ([2023-S 0163](#), [2023-H 5761](#)) that would

More...

extend current foreclosure protections for homeowners. The program, first launched in 2013, gives homeowners the opportunity to enter mediation before the lender forecloses on their home. About 46% of completed mediations have resulted in the homeowner avoiding foreclosure through a loan modification, reinstatement or acceptable repayment plan. The program is set to expire on July 1.

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- **Vella-Wilkinson bill would allow pharmacists to prescribe birth control**
The House Committee on Health and Human Services heard testimony on legislation ([2023-H 5282](#)) introduced by Rep. Camille F.J. Vella-Wilkinson (D-Dist. 21, Warwick) that would allow pharmacists to prescribe and dispense birth control. Sen. Meghan E. Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, Providence) has introduced similar legislation ([2023-S 0103](#)) in the Senate.
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- **Rep. Kazarian and Sen. Sosnowski bill calls for more school social workers**
House Majority Whip Katherine S. Kazarian (D-Dist. 63, East Providence, Pawtucket) and Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown) have introduced legislation that would bring more highly needed social workers into Rhode Island's schools. The legislation ([2023-H 5396](#), [2023-S 0258](#)) would require all public schools, grades K-12, to have at least one full-time certified school social worker for every 250 students.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Sen. Morgan introduces bill to eliminate state tax on Social Security income**
Sen. Elaine Morgan (R-Dist. 34, Hopkinton, Charlestown, Exeter, Richmond, West Greenwich) has introduced legislation ([2023-S 0084](#)) to completely eliminate the tax on Social Security income in Rhode Island. Similar legislation ([2023-H 5145](#)) has been introduced in the House by Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-Dist. 33, South Kingstown, Narragansett).
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Potter, Sen. Kallman sponsor bill to decriminalize psilocybin**
Rep. Brandon Potter (D-Dist. 16, Cranston) and Sen. Meghan Kallman (D-Dist. 15, Pawtucket, Providence) are sponsoring legislation ([2023-H 5923](#)) to decriminalize psilocybin, the naturally occurring hallucinogen found in so-called magic mushrooms. The bill would also, pending FDA approval, allow its use in treatment for chronic mental illness such as depression or PTSD.
[Click here to see news release.](#)
- **Rep. Tanzi introduces bill for universal, free school breakfast and lunch**
Rep. Teresa Tanzi (D-Dist. 34, South Kingstown, Narragansett) has introduced a bill ([2023-H 6007](#)) that would provide free breakfast and lunch to all public school students in the state. The bill would also encourage schools to purchase food from local farms, ask schools to engage with the community to cook culturally relevant meals and allow parents with means to pay for meals if they choose.
[Click here to see news release.](#)

- **Rep. Boylan introduces four firearm safety bills**

Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D-Dist. 66, Barrington, East Providence) has introduced four bills to promote firearm safety. One bill ([2023-H 5894](#)) would require individuals purchasing a rifle or shotgun to pass a safety test or have a hunting license. A second ([2023-H 5892](#)) would require rifles and shotguns to be sold with trigger locks. Currently, both regulations apply to pistols but not rifles or shotguns. A third bill ([2023-H 5893](#)) would limit the number of firearms an individual could purchase in a month to one, with exceptions for law enforcement and others. A fourth bill ([2023-H 5912](#)) would require officials to submit information about all firearms recovered at crime scenes to both the state crime laboratory and the federal tracing system to better track gun crime.

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- **Cortvriend bill would create path for intellectually disabled to experience college**

Rep. Terri Cortvriend (D-Dist. 72, Portsmouth, Middletown) has introduced the Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities Act ([2023-H 5636](#)), which would enable students age 18 to 22 with intellectual disabilities to attend classes at state institutions of higher education and participate in campus activities in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs.

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- **Ajello bill would reinstate law requiring traffic stop racial data collection**

Rep. Edith H. Ajello (D-Dist. 1, Providence) has introduced legislation ([2023-H 5889](#)) that would reinstate statewide collection and analysis of data about the races of drivers stopped and searched by police. Similar legislation ([2023-S 0368](#)) has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Ana B. Quezada (D-Dist. 2, Providence).

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-30-

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